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P R E F A C E.

THE progress of mind in the peculiar province of literature which we have taken up is our guide and source of inspiration, and in presenting another volume of *Human Nature* to the public, we allow this statement to stand as an explanation of the course which has been adopted in its management during the current volume. Without a creed or preconceived notion of any kind to exclude the light of Truth from being reflected on its pages, and without any trammels to hinder us in exploring impartially the most sacred superstitions, we have been enabled to bring together a mass of thoughts, facts, and contemporary history of peculiar interest and value to the progressive thinker. *Human Nature* commenced its career without friends or encouragement of any kind, but it has steadily gained all it could desire, till now it occupies a position which has seldom been attained by any predecessor maintaining such positive and independent ground. Though no creed or dogma governs our conduct, yet we feel bound to adhere to those demonstrable facts which regulate the action of mind and evolution of phenomena. Hence, though we offer a free platform, yet our labours do not tend to that discursive and aimless result, which would be the consequence of the abandonment of philosophical principles in their management. On the contrary, the labours of the past year as recorded in the present volume, have tended to consolidation and unity of thought, though a variety of contrary opinions have been at work to produce that effect. The grave question of Being—that which underlies all phenomena and finite existence, has been boldly considered, and some light has been thrown on the mythic negations of disguised Atheism, and the hideous monstrosities of Anthropomorphic Theism. Such inquiries

are in the highest degree grateful and satisfying to the most elevated powers of the best cultivated minds, and all who take part therein, whatever position they occupy, are worthy of the reader's gratitude; more particularly will this be accorded to the author of certain grand speculations unfolding glorious vistas of thought, the exploration of which may be the blessed province of many minds, leading them to light and development.

Our personal thanks are due, in a manner deeper than we can express, to those fraternal souls and Children of Truth who have spent themselves cheerfully and to good purpose in sustaining our position, and feeding with dainty fare an increasing circle of grateful recipients. Those practical thinkers and workers who found their philosophy of life, here and hereafter, on the scientific truths in, around, above, and everywhere, in relation to man, build upon a rock, and will prevail in obliterating dogmas, creeds, and antiquated ignorance; national distinctions and animosities; social inharmonies and crimes; and will ultimately bless mankind with a plentiful realization of their glorious privileges, and the best means of using them.

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